

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 SSM-03 SES-02 SAA-01 /088 W
-----107557 261106Z /11

R 251351Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9402
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T BEIRUT 4966

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLO SY LE IZ IS EG
SUBJ: REMARKS BY LOCAL UNRWA DIRECTOR ON ISRAELI AIR RAIDS AND
PALESTINIAN DEVELOPMENTS

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON AUGUST 24, LOCAL UNRWA
DIRECTOR ROBERT PREVOT SAID THE FOLLOWING:
2. THE ISRAELI PLANES ON AUGUST 21 HAD ATTACKED TWO TRAINING
CAMPS FOR FATAH "TIGER CUBS," ONE JUST OUTSIDE
BURJ AL BARAJINAH AND THE OTHER IN DAMOUR. (THE CUBS ARE
YOUNG MILITARY TRAINEES, GENERALLY BETWEEN 13 AND 16 YEARS
OLD.) THE ISRAELI PLANES HAD MACHINE-GUNNED THE TRAINING
CAMPS, BUT DROPPED NO BOMBS. THE ISRAELIS APPARENTLY HAD EXCEL-
LENT INTELLIGENCE, SINCE THE PLANES HAD HIT ONLY THE TWO TRAINING
CAMPS. AT BURJ AL BARAJINAH, THERE HAD BEEN FOUR PEOPLE KILLED
AND 12 WOUNDED - ALL CUBS AT THE CAMP. ONE OF THE PEOPLE KILLED
HAD DIED WHEN HE ACCIDENTLY SHOT HIMSELF DURING THE RAID.

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THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES AT DAMOUR.

3. PALESTINIAN OFFICIALS HAD TOLD PREVOT THEY WERE SURE
THE AUGUST 13 EXPLOSION AT THE APARTMENT BUILDING IN
FAKHANI HAD NOT BEEN ACCIDENTAL. THEY SAID AN EXPLOSIVE
CHARGE HAD BEEN PLANTED BY SOMEONE POSING AS A REPAIRMAN
WHO WAS KNOWN TO THE BUILDING'S CONCIERGE. THE PALESTINIANS

WERE BLAMING SYRIAN INTELLIGENCE FOR THE EXPLOSION.
PREVOT ADDED THAT THE PALESTINIANS HAD KEPT PRISONERS IN
THE BASEMENT OF THE BUILDING.

4. IN PREVIOUS CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, HANY SALAAM HAD
SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY SALAH KHALAT (ABU IYAD) ON
AUGUST 13, SHORTLY AFTER THE FAKHANI EXPLOSION, THAT THE
SYRIANS OR IRAQIS WERE RESPONSIBLE. (SALAAM, A LEBANESE
BUSINESSMAN, IS A CLOSE FRIEND OF ABU IYAD.) ABU IYAD
REPORTEDLY DISMISSED ALLEGATIONS THAT THE BLAST WAS THE
WORK OF ANY PALESTINIAN GROUP AND SAID SECURITY AT THE
SITE WAS SUCH THAT NO ISRAELI ELEMENT COULD HAVE COME
CLOSE TO IT. (COMMENT: WE DOUBT THAT PALESTINIANS OR
ANYONE ELSE REALLY KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED. END COMMENT.)

5. FOUR FATAH OFFICIALS HAD RETURNED TWO WEEKS AGO FROM
A SIX-WEEK COURSE IN EGYPT ON ADMINISTRATIVE TECHNIQUES,
PREVOT NOTED. THE FOUR OFFICIALS INCLUDED ABU DIB
KHALIL (ABU TA'AN), DEPUTY HEAD OF THE PALESTINE ARMED
STRUGGLE COMMAND. PREVOT REMARKED THAT THE PALESTINIANS
HAD RECENTLY BEEN SENDING MANY CADRES ABROAD FOR
ADMINISTRATIVE TRAINING.

6. PREVOT SAID THAT FATAH GUERRILLAS HAD KILLED 20 PRO-
IRAQI PALESTINIANS AND CAPTURED 80 OTHERS DURING THE
CLASHES IN BADDAWI CAMP NORTH OF TRIPOLI THE BEGINNING
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OF AUGUST. FATAH HAD QUICKLY RELEASED THE PRISONERS,
HOWEVER.

7. PREVOT BELIEVED THAT FATAH'S PLAN FOR UNIFYING THE
PALESTINIANS MILITARILY AND POLITICALLY HAD ABSOLUTELY NO
CHANCE OF BEING CARRIED OUT. HE CHARACTERIZED THE PLO IN
GENERAL AND FATAH IN PARTICULAR AS MORE FRAGMENTED THAN
EVER. MOREOVER, HE BELIEVED ARAFAT WOULD TRY TO COME TO
AN ACCOMMODATION WITH THE IRAQIS, SINCE HE COULD NOT
AFFORD TO ALIENATE THEM PERMANENTLY, AND SINCE HE
WISHED TO USE THEM TO PLAY OFF AGAINST THE SYRIANS.
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